

Submitted by
Linda Hassen

CONGRESSMAN DAN KILDEE

5th District of Michigan

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Congressman Dan Kildee: Oversized Role of Money in Politics Largely to Blame for Continued Shutdown, Broken System of Government

Oct 8, 2013 | Press Release

Kildee Denounces "Obscene Amount" of Money Distorting Political Process as U.S. Supreme Court Hears Case Which Could Open Door for More Money Flooding into PACS and Political Campaigns

Congressman Dan Kildee (MI-05) today said the oversized money in politics is in large part to blame for the continued government shutdown, now in its second week, fueling a distorted political process where Republicans are afraid to compromise in Congress. Congressman Kildee's remarks come as the U.S. Supreme Court today

heard oral arguments in *McCutcheon v. Federal Election Commission*, which Congressman Kildee called the “second-coming of *Citizens United*,” that could possibly open the door for even more money to flood into political action committees (PACs), political campaigns and party committees.

“Our democracy is not working the way it was designed, in large part due to the obscene amount of money in politics. *Citizens United* certainly opened the floodgates, but *McCutcheon v. Federal Election Commission* could make it even worse,” Congressman Kildee said. “The latest government shutdown is a prime example of everything wrong with our current system of government, which has been turned into a game of ‘gotcha’ rather than a way to actually reconcile differences in opinion amongst the American people. We were sent here to solve problems with one another, not read talking points past each other.”

“Money in politics has paralyzed progress in Washington,” Congressman Kildee continued. “I’m sure some Members of Congress would be more apt to compromise if they were not absolutely petrified of the Koch Brothers spending millions of dollars to unseat them in a primary. We can’t afford to have a system of government – propelled by billions in campaign cash – that rewards confrontation and condemns compromise. If we don’t fix the underlying problem of money in politics, we’ll continue to lurch crisis-to-crisis, fighting the same ideological battles, where my constituents and the American people ultimately lose.”

According to a [report](#) in *The New York Times*, the Koch Brothers, Charles and David, have been “deeply involved” in financing the brinkmanship leading up to the government shutdown, to the tune of more than \$200 million. Through a variety of groups, including the Club for Growth, Tea Party Patriots, Americans for Prosperity, FreedomWorks and Freedom Partners Chamber of Commerce, the Koch Brothers have “articulated a take-no-prisoners legislative strategy” that pushed Republicans into “cutting off financing for the entire federal government.”

“To many Americans, the shutdown came out of nowhere. But interviews with a wide array of conservatives show that the confrontation that precipitated the crisis was the outgrowth of a long-running effort to undo the law, the Affordable Care Act, since its passage in 2010 — waged by a galaxy of conservative groups with more money, organized tactics and interconnections than is commonly known,” the article [reads](#).

McCutcheon v. Federal Election Commission, brought by plaintiff Shaun McCutcheon, challenges aggregate contribution limits for individual campaign donors and could open the door for even more money to flood into the political system. In the 2012 election cycle, McCutcheon gave \$113,338 directly to candidates, PACs. and political party committees, [according to the Huffington Post](#). Currently, federal law bars individuals from donating more than \$123,200 to candidates, political parties and PACs during the current, two-year election cycle.

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Kochs to Congress: Focus on spending, not Obamacare

By Michael Isikoff, NBC News

In a move that highlights a growing rift in conservative ranks, Koch Industries -- the privately held energy conglomerate owned by billionaires Charles and David Koch -- today distanced the firm from allied political groups lobbying to keep the government shut down unless Obamacare is defunded.

A letter, signed by the company's chief lobbyist and sent to members of Congress, says that Koch Industries has taken no position on the shutdown dispute in Congress "nor have we lobbied on legislative provisions defunding Obamacare."

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Instead, Koch Industries wants Congress to focus on "balancing the budget" and "cutting government spending," among other goals, said Philip Ellender, Koch Industries president for government and public affairs.

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The letter comes in the wake of media reports documenting how Freedom Partners -- a newly formed conservative trade association closely associated with the Koch brothers -- has helped finance many of the conservative and Tea Party groups that have been pressuring Republicans to link defunding Obamacare to the passage of a continuing resolution to fund the government and extend the debt ceiling.

It was also spurred by a floor speech by Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid on Tuesday that blamed the Koch brothers for the government shutdown. The Kochs "have been raising and spending hundreds of millions of dollars to get us to where we are right now," Reid said.

Over the past year, Freedom Partners -- whose board members include three current and former Koch employees -- has doled out over \$235 million, including grants to Heritage Action for America, Americans for Prosperity, Tea Party Patriots, State Tea Party Express and other groups that have been pushing to defund the Affordable Care Act.



But privately, Koch officials have expressed concern to lawmakers that the prospect of a government default over the Obamacare issue would be a "disaster" for the economy, according to one GOP consultant who recently discussed the matter with Koch officials

and asked for anonymity. Koch Industries associates note that the firm is widely diversified, including last month's \$7.2 billion purchase of a company that makes connectors for Apple iPhones and other consumer products -- one of many markets that could be affected by spikes in credit resulting from a government default.



Democratic Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid expresses frustration Tuesday over talks with Republican House Speaker John Boehner over the federal government shutdown.

This story was originally published on Wed Oct 9, 2013 1:11 PM EDT

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KOCH COMPANIES PUBLIC SECTOR, LLC
Legal, Government, Public Affairs

October 9, 2013

Dear Senator:

A great deal of what you read and hear about Koch Industries is erroneous or misleading. Indeed, there was false information presented about Koch on the Senate floor by Senate Majority Leader Reid, who claimed yesterday that Koch was behind the shutdown of the federal government in an effort to defund the Affordable Care Act or "Obamacare." Because several of you have asked what our position is on this issue, we want to set the record straight and correct this misinformation.

Koch believes that Obamacare will increase deficits, lead to an overall lowering of the standard of health care in America, and raise taxes. However, Koch has not taken a position on the legislative tactic of tying the continuing resolution to defunding Obamacare nor have we lobbied on legislative provisions defunding Obamacare.

Instead, Koch has focused on educating the public about reducing our nation's debt and controlling runaway government spending. We believe that Congress should, at a minimum, keep to sequester-level spending guidelines, and develop a plan for more significant and widespread spending reductions in the future. We also believe that Congress should work to rein-in rampant government spending so that it becomes no longer necessary to continually raise the debt ceiling.

Congress should focus on these efforts: balancing the budget, tightening and cutting government spending, curbing cronyism, and eliminating market-distorting subsidies and mandates.

We are hopeful this sets the record straight and that in the future Senator Reid and other politicians will stop misrepresenting and distorting Koch's positions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Philip Ellender'.

Philip Ellender
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